ART BY ICHIHA AKIZUKI
WRITTEN BY MAI MOCHIZUKI
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
SHIZU YAMAUCHI

THIS QUIET TIME WHEN WE COMMUNE THROUGH ANTIQUES...

CHAPTER 9
WHEN SUMMER ENDS

DO YOU SEE THE WRINKLES ON THE UNGLAZED PORTION OF THE FOOT?

THAT'S FROM THE HARDNESS OF THE CLAY. THEY'RE KNOWN AS "CRINKLED CLOTH WRINKLES."

THEY SAY THAT KOKARATSU IS THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE POTTERY LOVER.

BUT THE MAIN CHARACTER-ISTIC OF KOKARATSU AND ITS GREATEST CHARM...

...HAS TO BE IS ITS SIMPLE YET POWERFUL APPEARANCE.

I see!

THEY LOOK LIKE LITTLE RIPPLES.

I SEE, I SEE...

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE

Holmes holds these "antique study sessions" for me.

HEH

YOU'RE SUCH A DILIGENT STUDENT, AOI-SAN.

When-ever we have free time...

HAHA.

IF YOU REALLY TRIED TO BECOME AN APPRAISER,

I THINK YOU'D OVERTAKE ME IN NO TIME.

H-HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

OF COURSE! BECAUSE YOU'RE TEACHING ME, HOLMES-SENSEI!

FWIP

TH-THAT WAS JUST DUMB LUCK...

YOU ALSO SINGLED OUT THE SHINO TEA BOWL.

THAT MUCH WAS CLEAR FROM THE HAKUIN PAINTINGS.

YOU REALLY DO HAVE A GOOD EYE, AOI-SAN.

It happened back when I first began working at Kura...

MANY OF THE ITEMS HERE ARE FRAGILE, SO A LIGHT DUSTING WILL SUFFICE.

OKAY.

YOU CAN START WITH SOME CLEANING.

蔵

KURA

It's like it draws you right in.

What is this?

This tea bowl feels special some-how...

DO YOU LIKE THAT TEA BOWL?

OH! S-SORRY...

I CAN'T SAY WHY... IT JUST SEEMS NICE.

HUH?

YOU REALLY DO HAVE A GOOD EYE, AOI-SAN.

IT WAS FIRED IN THE *MOMOYAMA* ERA.

IT'S A MASTERPIECE THE LIKES OF WHICH WILL NEVER BE MADE AGAIN.

THAT'S A SHINO TEA BOWL.

S-S-SIXTY MILLION?!

IF I HAD TO PUT A PRICE ON IT, IT'S PROBABLY WORTH AROUND 60 MILLION YEN.

IT'S ONE OF MY GRAND-FATHER'S MOST PRIZED POSSES-SIONS.

YOU COULD SAY IT'S THE MOST ARTISTICALLY VALUABLE PIECE IN THE STORE.

That's a secret, okay?

WE PUT WONDERFUL THINGS ON DISPLAY BECAUSE WE WANT PEOPLE TO SEE THEM, YOU KNOW.

GOSH, THAT WAS SUCH A SURPRISE!

SIGH

And it was just sitting there on display...

R-RING RING

I'D LIKE TO REQUEST AN APPRAISAL.

PLEASE, COME IN.

THUNK

I WAS HOPIN' YOU'D HAVE A LOOK AT THIS.

IF I MAY...

WELL, WELL.

MY FAMILY'S RUN A BUSINESS IN OSAKA FOR GENERA-TIONS.

MY GRANDPA USED THE MONEY HE MADE TO BUY LOTS OF ANTIQUES.

THIS HERE'S ONE OF 'EM...

IT'S A KIZETO TEA BOWL, AIN'T IT?

It's a lot like the one he showed me, heavy-looking and rugged...

This one has a matte finish and an ocher glaze...

A KIZETO!

HOLMES-SAN TAUGHT ME ABOUT THOSE BEFORE.

SHAKE
SHAKE

BUT WHAT'S THIS...?

SOMETHING FEELS OFF ABOUT IT.

I'M SORRY, BUT THIS IS A FAKE.

A FAKE ?!

THEY DON'T HAVE THIS LEADEN HEFT.

AND THE REAL ONES FEEL MUCH LIGHTER THAN THEY LOOK.

BUT THERE'S NOTHING OF THE SORT HERE.

A GENUINE KIZETO TYPICALLY HAS A GLOSSY APPEARANCE, SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS AN "OIL GLAZE."

THIS IS CLEARLY A COUNTERFEIT DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE A KIZETO.

I KNOW A LOT OF THINGS.

SO I'LL LET YOU IN ON SOMETHING ELSE.

CLATTER

WHAT WOULD A KID LIKE YOU KNOW?!

HUH?!

WHAT ?!

I BELIEVE YOU CAME HERE KNOWING FULL WELL...

...THAT THIS TEA BOWL WAS COUNTER-FEIT.

AND YOU WERE JUST WALKING AROUND WITH A KIZETO TEA BOWL?

W-WELL, I JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN THE AREA...

SO WHY COME TO AN ANTIQUE SHOP ALL THE WAY IN KYOTO?

FROM YOUR DIALECT, I CAN TELL THAT YOU DO INDEED HAIL FROM OSAKA.

ALSO, THAT SUIT...

BUT IT SEEMS YOU DIDN'T GIVE THE SAME ATTENTION TO YOUR SHOES.

!

IT LOOKS RATHER EXPENSIVE, BUT IT DOESN'T FIT YOU QUITE RIGHT.

I'D IMAGINE YOU RENTED BOTH IT AND THAT WATCH TO GIVE THE ILLUSION OF WEALTH...

YOU HEARD THAT YAGASHIRA SEIJI'S GRAND-SON WAS MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS AN APPRAISER, AND THAT HE WAS DOING APPRAISALS WHILE APPRENTICING AT A TERAMACHI SANJO ANTIQUE SHOP.

YOU CAME HERE THINKING THAT A MERE STUDENT WOULD BE EASY TO DECEIVE.

HERE IS MY THEORY.

MOST PEOPLE ARE TAKEN ABACK TO SEE SOMEONE SO YOUNG ON THE JOB.

YOU WEREN'T AT ALL SURPRISED WHEN I STARTED MY APPRAISAL.

AS EVIDENCE,

THAT'S TRUE...

SO THIS MAN CAME HERE EXPLICITLY TO TRY AND TRICK HOLMES?

IN ADDITION, THIS TEA BOWL...

...HAS BEEN PROFESSION-ALLY DISTRESSED.

DIS-TRESSED?

...TO MAKE THEM SEEM OLD AND TIME-WORN.

THERE ARE ARTISANS THAT SPECIALIZE IN TAKING NEWLY MADE TEA BOWLS AND WEATHERING THEM...

IT'S A PROCESS ALSO KNOWN AS "ANTIQUING."

AND IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH PROFES-SIONALS,

YOU MUST BE ACCUSTOMED TO SELLING COUNTER-FEITS.

...TO PAWN OFF SAID COUNTER-FEITS.

I ASSUME YOU SPECIALIZE IN TARGETING INEXPERIENCED APPRAISERS...

OH... WELL, Y'SEE...

...THAT WHILE I MAY BE YOUNG...

SLAM

SO I'M SORRY TO INFORM YOU...

WHOOSH

I AIN'T SO GREEN THAT I'D BE FOOLED BY THIS CRUDE IMITATION.

SHOOT, THAT REALLY GOT MY GOAT...

He ran away...

SALT?

YES, PLEASE.

AOI-SAN,

COULD YOU CAST SOME SALT OUT THE DOOR?

WOULDN'T THAT BE KIND OF A WASTE?

DELICIOUS SALT

UM...

WE ONLY HAVE BOILED EGG SEASONING. IS THAT OKAY?

DEALING WITH MALICIOUS COUNTERFEITS ALWAYS IRRITATES ME.

I'M SORRY.

TAKE THAT!

AND THAT!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO IMAGINE IT!

BUT THE MENTAL IMAGE OF YOU SPREADING SEASONED SALT JUST DEFLATED THE WHOLE THING.

YES, THAT CERTAINLY WOULD BE A WASTE.

SHOULDN'T WE CALL THE POLICE?

BUT THAT MAN... HE WAS A COUNTER-FEITER, RIGHT?

WHILE IT MAY SOUND HARSH TO HEAR, THOSE HE DECEIVES TAKE A SHARE OF THE BLAME.

Of course I'll report him, but...

BUT IT SEEMS HE MAINLY TARGETS APPRAI-SERS.

IT WOULD BE ONE THING IF HE WERE FOOLING PEOPLE ON THE STREET.

It's like a duel between counterfeiter and appraiser!

I SEE... EVEN IF SOMEONE BRINGS IN A FAKE,

AN APPRAISER NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH IT.

IT'S AN APPRAISER'S JOB TO DETERMINE AN OBJECT'S AUTHENTICITY.

HOLMES-SAN...

...IS AN INSULT TO THOSE WHO LOVE REAL CREATORS AND THEIR ART.

CREATING COUNTERFEITS TO EXTORT MONEY OUT OF OTHERS...

SIGH

THAT SAID, I HOLD NOTHING BUT SCORN FOR THOSE WHO PRODUCE COUNTERFEITS.

YOU'RE SUCH AN UPRIGHT PERSON.

WELL, YOU JUST REALLY LOVE ART.

THAT'S WHY YOU GET SO MAD ABOUT FAKES.

UPRIGHT? ME?

AOI-SAN, YOU'RE GIVING ME TOO MUCH CREDIT.

ALTHOUGH I DO HATE COUNTER-FEITS...

I'M ACTUALLY QUITE PERVERSE, WITH A FUNDAMENTALLY WICKED PERSONALITY.

W-WICKED?

OH... YOU DIDN'T KNOW?

US KYOTO BOYS ARE AWFUL WICKED.

GRIN

This all took place one peaceful summer afternoon.

CHAPTER 9
END

...!

For some reason, that bright smile of his sent chills up my spine...